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Fact Sheet: Synthetic Drugs in Iowa

Updated 2-1-12

Two relatively new and rapidly evolving types of synthetic drugs—cannabinoids and cathinones—are being abused in Iowa, resulting in more teenagers requiring hospital emergency room treatment.

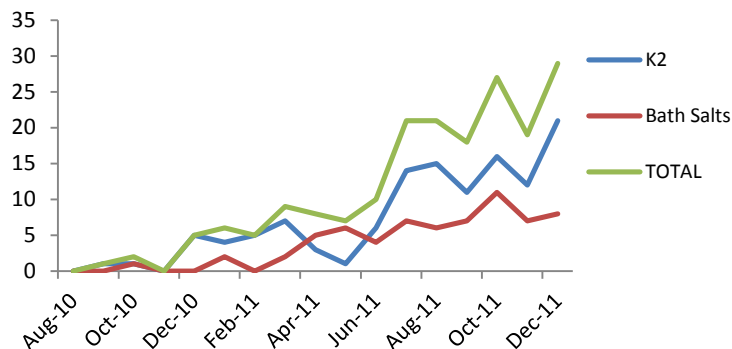
Synthetic Cannabinoids (a.k.a. K2, Spice, Herbal Incense, etc.):

- Variations are numerous and growing, but not FDA-approved for human consumption.
- Products are made by spraying chemicals on plants, to look like oregano or marijuana.
- Marketed as “incense” or “potpourri,” and a “legal” alternative to marijuana. Sold primarily in smoke and specialty shops, some convenience stores and over the Internet.
- Typically sold from behind the clerk’s counter in small, brightly colored, and exotically-named 3-ounce packages for \$15-\$35 per package.



- Products are usually smoked, more potent than marijuana and effects can last 3-5 hours.
- Physical effects include: vomiting, rapid heart rates, elevated blood pressure, seizures and non-responsiveness. May be addictive.
- Psychological effects include: agitation, anxiety, hallucinations (can be very intense), panic attacks, paranoia, psychotic episodes and suicidal tendencies.
- State law—Iowa Code 124.204(4)—explicitly bans 6 synthetic cannabinoids as Schedule I Controlled Substances. A legislative proposal would expand the ban to many more.
- The DEA has temporarily placed 5 synthetic cannabinoids into Schedule I of the U.S. Controlled Substances Act. Congress is now working to permanently ban many more.
- Often labeled “*not for human consumption*” and “*does not contain (banned compounds).*” Distributors may provide lab reports claiming products contain no outlawed compounds.
- Iowa crime lab tests indicate contents don’t always match label, and two identical packages can have different contents (sometimes explicitly illegal and sometimes not).

Exposure to K2 and Bath Salts – Calls from Iowa Hospitals (Statewide Poison Control Center)



Synthetic Cathinones (a.k.a. Bath Salts, Ivory Wave, Cloud Nine, Vanilla Sky, etc.):

- Variations are numerous and growing, but not FDA-approved for human consumption.
- Compounds are central nervous stimulants, with effects similar to cocaine, meth or MDMA. Described as a white, tan or brown odorless, powdery substance.
- Marketed as “bath crystals,” plant food and herbal “incense.” Sold primarily in smoke and specialty shops, some convenience stores and over the Internet.
- Typically sold from behind the clerk’s counter in brightly colored and exotically-named 50-500 milligram packets or small round canisters for \$25-\$50 per package.



- Synthetic cathinones can be snorted, injected or eaten.
- Physical effects include: racing heartbeat, extreme elevations of blood pressure, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, strange eye movements and white powder on nostrils or lips.
- Psychological effects include: extreme agitation or anxiety, hallucinations, paranoia, change in personality, depression, aggression or disturbed behavior, delusions, hostility, violence and suicidal thoughts.
- MDPV and mephedrone can cause intense cravings, leading to binges lasting several days.
- Sold at tobacco shops, convenience stores, gas stations, head shops, and truck stops among others; and via the Internet.
- State law—Iowa Code 124.204(4)—explicitly bans 2 synthetic cathinones as Schedule I Controlled Substances. A legislative proposal would expand the ban to many more.
- The DEA has temporarily placed 3 synthetic cathinones into Schedule I of the U.S. Controlled Substances Act. Congress is now working to permanently ban many more.
- Often labeled “*not for human consumption*” and “*does not contain (banned compounds)*.” Distributors may provide lab reports claiming products contain no outlawed compounds.
- Iowa crime lab tests indicate contents don’t always match label, and two identical packages can have different contents (sometimes explicitly illegal and sometimes not).

For more info, go to: www.Iowa.Gov/ODCP. Sources: DEA, NDIC, Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center.